

# New Descriptions

A NEW SPECIES OF SKINK OF THE GENUS *DASIA* GRAY 1889  
[REPTILIA: SCINCIDAE] FROM CAR NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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*(With three text-figures)*

## INTRODUCTION

This description is based on two specimens collected by the Zoological Survey of India from the Car Nicobar Island. The specimens belong to the genus *Dasia* Gray 1839, but do not agree with any of the known species of the genus and are described as a new species.

### *Dasia nicobarensis* sp. nov.

*Description:* Body and head narrower; snout obtusely pointed, distance between the end of the snout and the fore limb more than one and less than one and a half the distance between axilla and groin; lower eyelid scaly; supranasals entire, narrow behind but not triangular and not in contact with one another, frontal considerably longer than fronto-parietal (nearly twice) and almost equal to the fronto-parietal and interparietal taken together; interparietal just separates parietal; prefrontal separate, its length slightly more than its breadth; fronto-nasal about as long as broad; two enlarged temporals; four large supra-

oculars, second the largest, first in contact with frontal and prefrontal, second in contact with frontal, prefrontal and anterior corner of the frontoparietal, 3rd touching frontal and frontoparietal, 4th frontoparietal and parietal; 8 supraciliaries, 1st longer and higher than others.

Ear opening very small, slightly larger than the nostril with one projecting lobule in the anterior border; anterior and posterior loreals both longer than high and almost equal in length; 7 supralabials, fifth longest and below the eye; 7 infralabials, 4th longest; 2 pairs of enlarged postmentals; body scales subequal, dorsal scales comparatively broader than long in relation to that of *D. olivacea* and with 3 (rarely five) prominent keels; 26 scales round the body and 38 longitudinal scales on the back (from below head shield to just above the hip joint), tail tapering to a point, slightly longer than body and head; middle row of ventral caudal scales with 9 small scales after the vent, followed by transversely enlarged scales that gradually become narrower posteriorly; the leg reaches nearly beyond the elbow. 18 lamellae beneath the fourth toe.

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Dorsal colour in preserved specimen uniformly dark brown with a pale stripe along the hind part of the flank and base of the tail. Pale bluish-white below, ventral scales almost white in centre with bluish tinge along the borders.

*Dasia* Gray as the genus is distinguished from *Lygosoma* Hardwicke and Gray by the presence of supranasal and from *Riopa* Gray in having well developed limbs. There are supranasal and well developed limbs in the two skinks from the Car Nicobar. A key to the

Measurements (in mm) and count: Reg. Nos.	2311	<i>D. olivacea</i>		<i>D. nicobarensis</i>		
		Nicobar 2312	12549	Andaman 13224	Paratype	Holotype
Distance between nostrils	4	4	4.5	4	3.5	3.5
Nostril to end of snout	2	2	3	3	2.5	2.5
Head length between snout to ear	21	21	22	25	19	20
Head breadth at maximum	13	15	15	18	13.5	12.5
Inner canthus to nostril	7	6	6.5	7	6	5
Palpabul fissure	6	5	5	6.5	4	6
Snout to Axilla	37	36	41	47	38	37
Axilla to groin	43	56	55	58	49	45
Snout to vent	91	103	110	124	98	96
Length of forelimb	29	32	33	38	29	31
Length of hindlimb	30	35	40	46	36	37
Vent to tip of the tail	122	X	X	X	102	121
Scales round the body	28	30	28	29	26	26
Scales down middle of back	12+25	13+26	13+25	14+25	13+25	12+26
Lamellae under fourth toe	18	18	19	20	18	18

*Material examined:* *Holotype:* 1 example; 217 mm; ZSI. Reg. No. 23211; 1 example; Sta. No. 19, Coconut grove, about 2 km. S.W. of Teetop Guest House, Car Nicobar, Dr. A. G. K. Menon and Party; 8-iii-1972. *Paratype:* Reg. No. 23212; 1 example; Sta. No. 6, Circuit House, Malacea, Car Nicobar, Dr. B. K. Tikader, 3-iii-1970.

*Remarks:* Some abnormalities are there in these two type specimens such as one side of the head of holotype the two loreals are separated by the downward extension of the prefrontal. In the paratype the tail is shorter, almost equal to the body and enlarged ventral caudal scale also begins after the 14th scale row.

Nevertheless, there was no difficulty in placing these two specimens in the genus

species of the genus *Dasia* is given below for identification of the present species.

The new species comes in between *D. grisea* (Gray) and *D. olivacea* Gray. It agrees with *D. grisea* (scale round the body 26 to 28) in the scale count round the body which is 26 in both the specimens, but markedly differs from it in having well separated supranasals, in the distance between inner canthus and nostril being more than the length of palpable fissure, in anterior loreal being longer than high and almost equal to posterior and also in having colour differences. The present species is so similar in coloration and head shield characters to *D. olivacea* that there is a chance of confusing it with the latter, if scale count is not done. *Dasia nicobarensis* markedly differs from *olivacea* in its scale count round

the body (26), in the shape of the head which is comparatively narrower, in the transversely enlarged scales below the tail beginning 9th to 14th scale row below vent (*vice*, starts just down below vent), loreal being almost equal (*vice*, anterior smaller than posterior) and also in dorsal scale keels numbering 3 to 5 (*vice*, 3-7). Dorsal coloration of *D. nicobarensis* is deep brown with a few scattered blackish dots and whitish broad pale stripe along the hind part of the flank and base of the tail but in *olivacea* though the coloration is

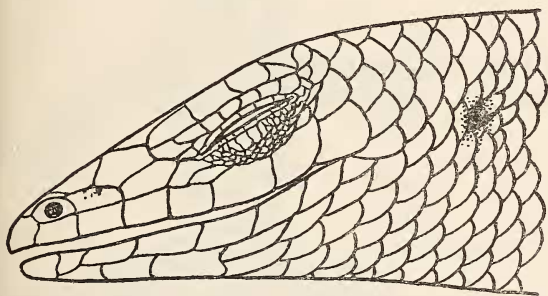
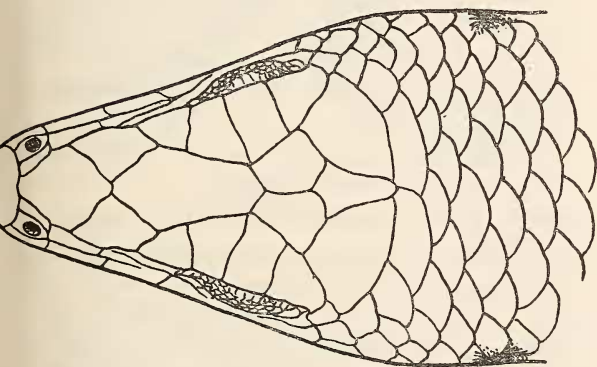
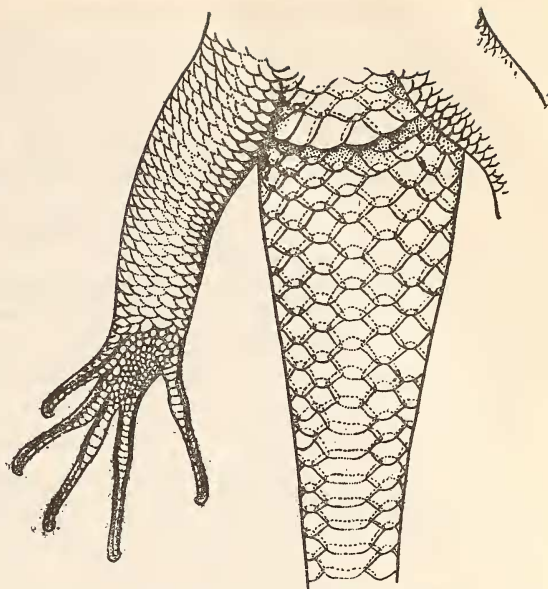


Fig. 1. *Dasia nicobarensis* sp. nov.  
Lateral view of head (enlarged).



Dorsal view of head (enlarged).



Ventral view, a portion of posterior region of Holotype showing one leg and a part of tail (enlarged).

variable, the general body colour is uniformly greenish-brown above or with black spots arranged in transverse series. Many of these spots bearing central spots of white may also disappear and sometimes there is only a broad pale stripe along the hind part of the flank. In this respect the new species has got some colour similarity. On the other hand in *D. grisea* the general body colour is pale grayish. The back of the head is with rounded spots or markings and dark streaks on the back and sides with an indistinct interrupted pale stripe on each side.

*Distribution:* The distribution of *D. grisea*, is Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, Philippines, but *D. olivacea* is more extensive as it includes Thailand and Indonesia, Peninsula south of Lat. 15° N; Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF *Dasia* GRAY

- A<sub>1</sub>. Back uniformly coloured or spotted; 26-30 scales round the body.  
B<sub>1</sub>. Supranasal in contact with each other, 26-28 scales round the body. *D. grisea* (Gray)  
B<sub>2</sub>. Supranasal not in contact with each other.  
C<sub>1</sub>. Preanals enlarged.  
*D. subcaerulea* (Boulenger)  
C<sub>2</sub>. Preanals not enlarged.  
D<sub>1</sub>. Postanal ventral caudal scales enlarged transversely after 9th to 14th scale rows; 26 scales round the body.  
*D. nicobarensis* n. sp.

- D<sub>2</sub>. Ventral caudal enlarged just after the postanal scales; 28-30 scales round the body. *D. olivacea* Gray  
A<sub>2</sub>. Back with broad, black, transverse bars; 24 scales round the body.  
*D. haliana* (Halay & Nevill)

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TWO NEW SPECIES OF FROGS (RANIDAE) FROM KHASI HILLS, INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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(With three text-figures)

During the study of the large collection of Amphibia at the Eastern Regional Station, Shillong, we came across two new species of Ranid frogs which are described here.

***Rana danieli*** sp. nov.  
(Fig. 1 and Table 1)

Two specimens of frogs collected from Mawphlang and one specimen from Nongkrem are being described as *Rana danieli* sp. nov. in honour of J. C. Daniel, Curator, Bombay Natural History Society who has made guiding contributions to the Amphibian fauna of India.

**Colour:** (In spirit) Dorsally varying from light brown to dark brown, sometimes with

dark irregular patches; two dorsolateral stripes from eye to hind end, the inner edge of which is whitish to grey; lateral side darker forming a dark band which is continued forwards as a preorbital stripe upto the tip of snout through the nostril. Limbs with dark cross bars, ventral side white, throat and breast sometimes mottled.

In life the specimens had a rich brown colour with a reddish tinge.

**Head:** Rather strongly depressed, as long as broad; snout rounded, projecting little beyond lower jaw by about diameter of tympanum; canthus rostralis obtuse; loreal region concave; nostril a little nearer to tip of snout than to eye, distance between them about one and a half times the interorbital width. Pupil elliptically horizontal, diameter of eye a little more than interorbital width; tympanum distinct, slightly depressed, smooth, about half diameter

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